

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 12-15 and 17. Also attached are replacement sheets of drawings including Figs. 12-15 and 17, which replaces the original sheets of drawings Figs. 12-17.

In Figs. 12-15 and 17, previously labeled element numbers have been amended for clarity in accordance with the amended written description as follows:

- "137" has been changed to "152" in Figs. 12 and 17;
- "138" has been changed to "154" in Figs. 12 and 17;
- "139" has been changed to "146" in Fig. 12 and 17;
- "147" has been changed to "158" in Figs. 12 and 17;
- "S" has been changed to "159" in Fig. 13;
- "52" has been changed to "152" in Fig. 13;
- "144" has been changed to "158" in Fig. 13;
- "100" has been changed to "40" in Figs. 14 and 15;
- "139a" has been changed to "157" in Fig. 17; and
- "148" has been changed to "146a" in Fig. 17.

Attachments: Replacement Sheets
Annotated Sheets Showing Changes

REMARKS

I. Introduction

This Amendment amends claims 1 and 5, cancels claim 7, and adds new claims 11-16. No new matter is introduced by the claim amendments to claims 1 and 5 or by new claims 11-16. This Amendment also amends the specification and drawings to correct several informalities. Claims 1, 5, 6, and 8-16 are now pending in this application, of which claims 1 and 11 are in independent form.

Support for the amendments to claim 1 may be found, for example, at page 13, line 6 through page 14, line 17 of the specification as well as in FIG. 13 and the accompanying description of this figure at page 15, lines 6-22 of the specification. More specifically regarding the language "operative" in amended claim 1, the ride-over cam face portion is an operative cam face portion as described at page 15 and page 17.

II. Restriction Requirement

Applicants acknowledge that claims 2-4 were withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute cancelled claims 2-4 by way of a divisional application. However, Applicants respectfully submit that, as amended, independent claim 1 is believed to fully distinguish over the cited reference (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2003/0106296 to Ishimori) as discussed hereinafter and also generic to withdrawn claims 2-4. In the interest of efficiency in prosecuting this application and the subject matter claimed herein, Applicants respectfully request that withdrawn claims 2-4 be rejoined based on the allowability of generic independent claim 1. This will save costs for Applicants and valuable examining time for the Examiner in not having to examine claims 2-4 in a divisional application.

III. Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants timely filed a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement in this application on November 8, 2005, which was stamp dated November 10, 2005 by the OIPE, before the issuance of the outstanding Office Action. The Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement included a properly annotated Form PTO/SB/08A. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the references identified on this Form PTO/SB/08A and provide an initialed copy of the Form with the next Office communication.

IV. Drawing and Specification Objections

In the Office Action, drawings stand objected to under 37 CFR §1.84(p)(4) for duplicative use of certain reference characters. The drawings further stand objected to under 37 CFR §1.84(p)(5) for including reference characters in the drawings not included in the specification and for not including reference characters in the drawings that are set forth in the specification. The specification stands objected to for similar informalities and for specific reference character errors outlined on page 4 of the Office Action.

Applicants thoroughly reviewed and amended the specification and drawings as necessary to overcome the foregoing objections. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the drawing and specification objections.

V. Indicated Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 5-9. New claims 11-16 reflect indicated allowable subject matter in the Office Action. New independent claim 11 is a combination of original claims 1 and 5 and new dependent claims 12-16 are identical to original claims 6-10. Based on the indicated allowable subject matter in the combination of original claims 1 and 5, new independent claim 11 should be in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested. Additionally, new dependent claims 12-16, which depend directly or indirectly from new independent claim 11 should also be in condition for allowance.

VI. Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) for anticipation by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2003/0106296 to Ishimori. In the Office Action, it is asserted that Ishimori discloses all limitations of independent claim 1, “including a displacement converter mechanism that comprises a pivotal cam member (right knuckle member 30, in FIG. 2) and a cam follower member (the pin attached to 31 inserted in the slot 35, paragraph 0041, last sentence.)”. In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections.

Ishimori discloses, in FIGS. 2-3, an interlocking mechanism in the form of a link mechanism including an interlocking rod (31) connected to one of knuckle arms (30)

interlocked through a tie rod (29) of a steering mechanism for steering the front drive wheels (1) in response to turning of a steering wheel (28) disposed on the driving platform (5). The operative connection between the interlocking rod (31) and knuckle arm (30) includes a slot (35) acting as a play-accommodating device (emphasis added) for transmitting a displacement of the knuckle arm (30) to the interlocking rod (31) only when the steering wheel (28) (and thus the knuckle arm (30)) is turned in excess of a predetermined angle from a straight running position. The interlocking rod (31) and knuckle arm (30) are connected through a pin inserted in the slot (35).

As will be noted from and review of paragraphs [0040-0041] and FIGS. 2-3 of Ishimori, the mechanism cited in the Office Action is a "play accommodating device" having a pin inserted therethrough for transmitting a displacement of knuckle arm (30) to the interlocking rod (31) only when the steering wheel (28) is turned in excess of a predetermined angle. This "play accommodating device" and pin inserted therein is not a pivotal cam mechanism having a direct association or interaction with the right and left wheel clutches (27) as set forth in independent claim 1. In particular, Ishimori does not specifically teach that clutches (27) are operated when pin moves in slot (35) which is the apparent intimation provided in the Office Action with respect this mechanism but rather shows a push/pull linkage (i.e. pin and slot). However, claim 1 recites that the "clutch operating member is displaced via said pivotal cam mechanism". Since Ishimori fails to teach or suggest the claimed pivotal cam mechanism comprising a cam member and a cam follower for effecting operation of clutches (27), independent claim 1 fully distinguishes over Ishimori.

Further, independent claim 1 as amended now recites that the cam follower has an operative cam face portion for contacting the cam member to move the cam follower in order to disengage said one side clutch and a stable cam face portion for maintaining the side clutch at a predetermined clutch disengaging condition during a further steering operation of the steerable wheels after the clutch disengagement. The amendments to independent claim 1 clarify that the cam follower comprises an operative cam face portion and stable cam face portion. It is noted that this latter language tracks the allowable subject matter found in canceled claim 7. Accordingly, it is submitted that the clarifying language with respect to the cam follower comprising a "stable cam face portion" places amended independent claim 1 in condition for allowance.

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Attorney Docket No. 0388-043890


An advantage of the claimed cam mechanism is that once the side clutch is disengaged by the operative cam face portion, no further disengaging movement is caused by the stable cam face portion even when the wheels are steered further, and substantially no extra force apart from that required to turn the wheel is needed to overcome the "urging force" to further operate the side clutch. The cited mechanism from the Ishimori reference is certainly not adapted to accomplish this result.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the rejection of independent claim 1 over Ishimori is respectfully requested. Claim 10 adds further limitations to independent claim 1 and distinguishes over Ishimori for all the foregoing reasons as well. Applicant further requests reconsideration of the rejection of claim 10 over Ishimori.

VII. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the pending rejections and objections is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding any of the foregoing or wish to discuss this application in further detail to advance prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,
THE WEBB LAW FIRM

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Katsuhiko Uemura et al.
Application No. 10/823,532
"Four-Wheel Drive Work Vehicle"
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ANNOTATED SHEET

Fig.12

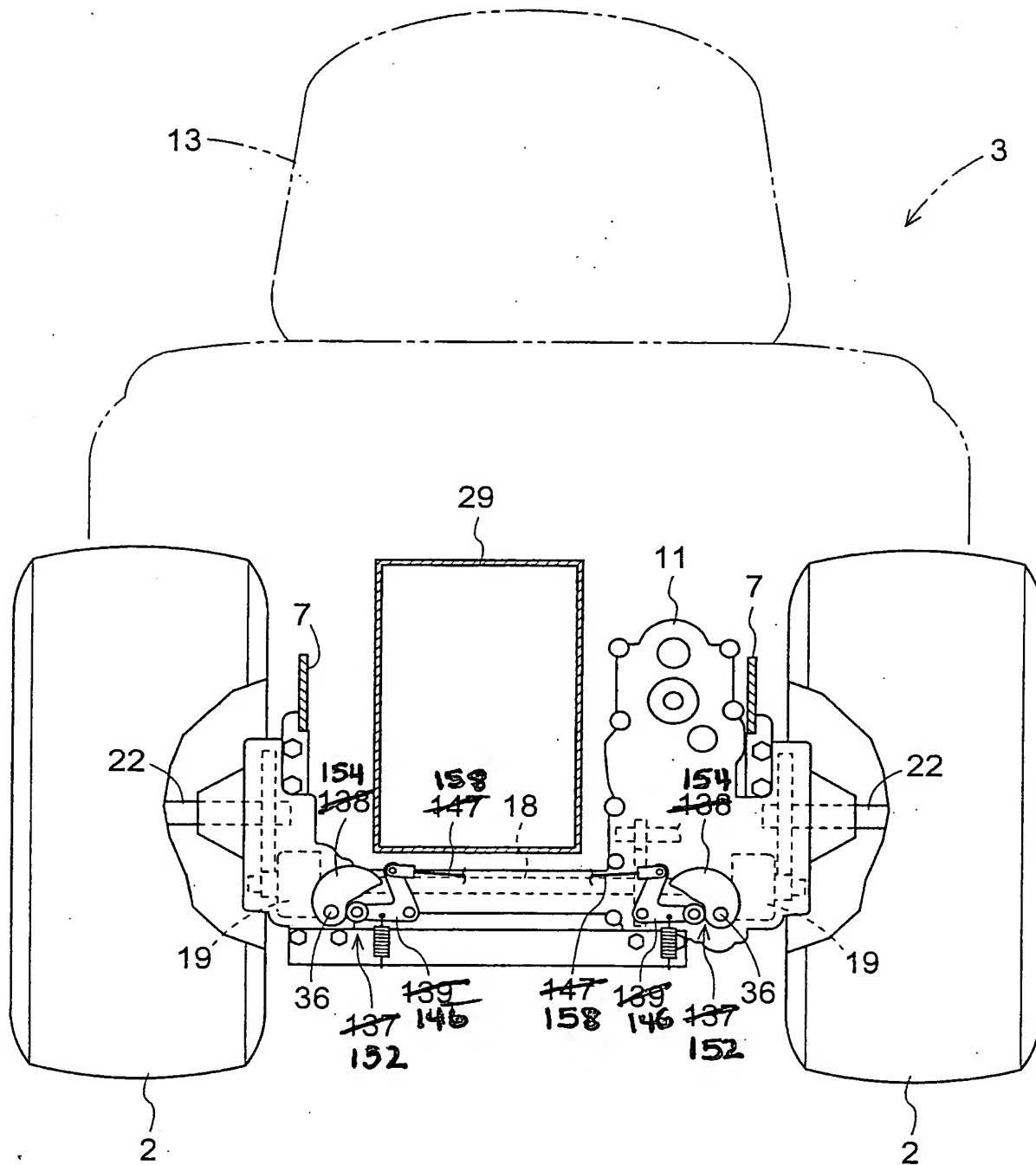


Fig.13

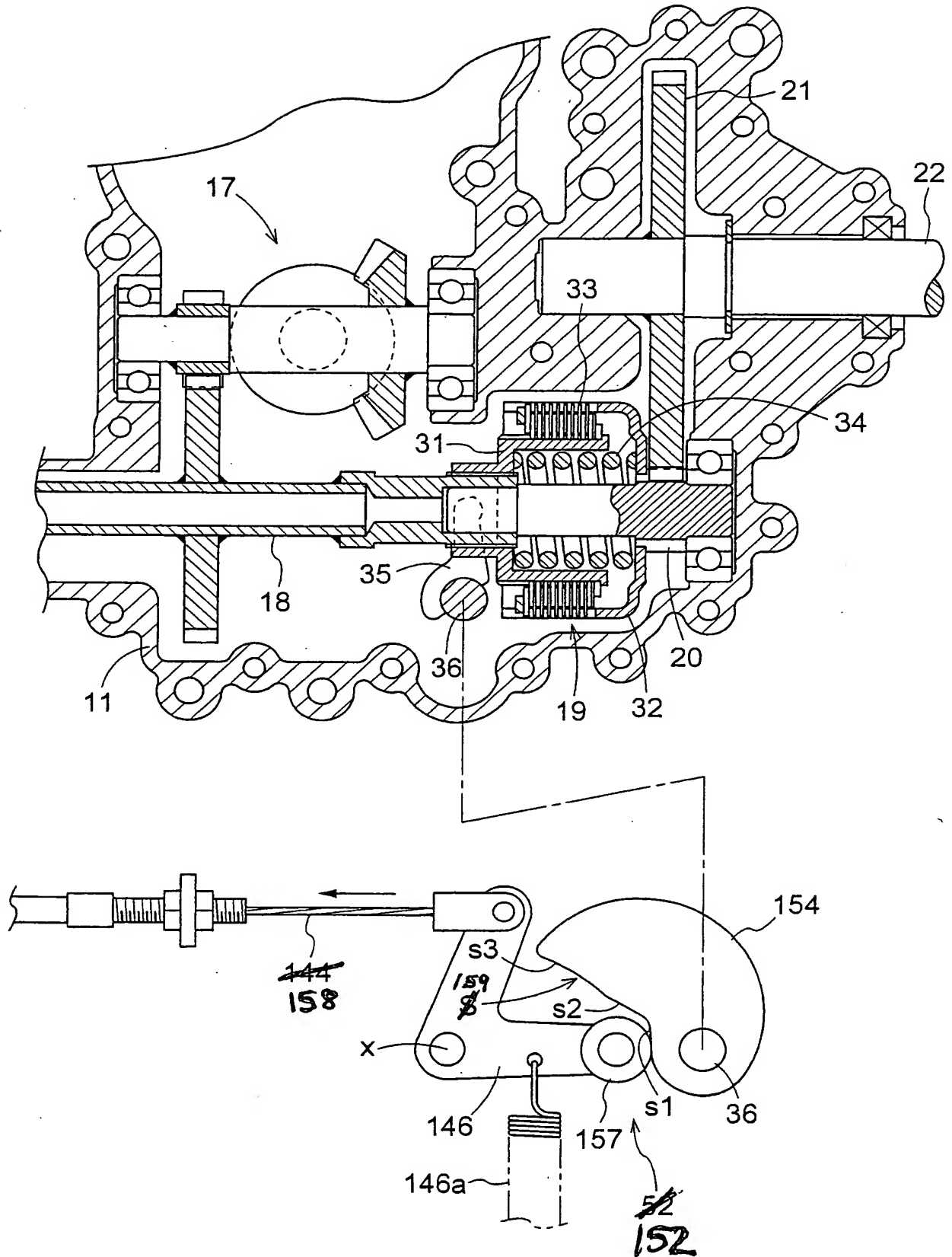


Fig. 14

